



# The Tahoma News

January 1 - April 2010

*The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. Mount Rainier National Park is a source of inspiration, providing boundless opportunities for exploration, solitude, and contemplation.*

## Discovering Winter at Mount Rainier

The mountain's landscape undergoes a dramatic transformation in winter. Its colorful subalpine meadows and lush old growth forests are draped with a thick blanket of snow for much of the year. The sometimes dusty appearing glaciers are freshly covered in white and the snow-covered roofs of the rustic historic buildings are rimmed with icicles, creating a picture perfect setting.

Harsh winter conditions create an ecosystem that requires special adaptations for the mountain's plants and animals. How do they spend the challenging winter months and cope with heavy snows and chilling winds? How do they survive the long winter to reproduce and gather food and store energy in the mountain's short snow-free season? Stop by the new Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center at Paradise to learn about the mountain's winter ecology by taking a snowshoe walk with a ranger and viewing the exhibits and film.

Warm up in the visitor center while enjoying the snowy view from the great hall, having lunch or browsing in the gift shop. The snow play area is open for sledding when enough snow is on the ground to protect vegetation at Paradise. Other winter activities at Paradise include crosscountry skiing, winter camping and snowboarding. See the Winter Hours on page 4 for snowshoe and ski rental locations inside the park.

Be prepared for your own winter adaptations by wearing warm clothing with a waterproof outer



*The Meadowlands diorama in the new visitor center at Paradise conveys the complexity of Paradise Meadows in winter and summer.*

layer, carrying tire chains in your car and reading the winter safety and recreation information on pages 2 and 3. For more information ask for a Winter Recreation brochure.

## Mapping the Future of Carbon River Road

In November 2006, 18 inches of rain fell on Mount Rainier in 36 hours. Many park roads were flooded, including the Carbon River Road which was severely damaged and completely washed out in some areas. Due to the history of repeated flood damage to this 5 mile road, the park long range plan states it will be closed after the next major washout.

In 2008, park officials convened public scoping meetings about the future of the Carbon River Road. Information summarizing these meetings and public comments are posted on the park planning webpage at <http://www.nps.gov/mora/parkmgmt/planning.htm>

Five alternatives have been developed that are being analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA (which will include the park's preferred alternative) will be completed in early winter 2010, and released for public comment. All five alternatives would retain the first 1.2 miles of intact road from the Carbon Entrance.

**Alternative 1: Continue Current Management**  
Maintain a primitive trail within the historic road

corridor. Retain Ipsut Creek Campground with 24 individual and 2 group sites.

**Alternative 2: Hike/Bike Trail**

Construct a formal hike/bike trail to Ipsut Creek Trailhead. Retain Ipsut Creek Campground with 15 individual and 3 group sites.

**Alternative 3: Public Vehicle Access**

Reconstruct a one-lane road to milepost 3.6. Construct a formal hike/bike trail from there to Ipsut Creek Trailhead. Retain Ipsut Creek Campground with 15 individual and 3 group sites.

**Alternative 4: Shuttle Access**

Reconstruct a one-lane road to milepost 4.4 for shuttles only. Construct a formal hike/bike trail from there to Ipsut Creek Trailhead. Retain Ipsut Creek Campground with 20 individual and 3 group sites.

**Alternative 5: Reroute Trail**

Construct a hiking only trail in wilderness from the entrance to Ipsut Creek Trailhead. Close Ipsut Creek Campground and create a new backcountry campground elsewhere.

### Welcome

...to Mount Rainier National Park!



Acting Superintendent  
Randy King

The big snows came early in November, closing most park roadways and bringing to a halt any notion of more trail hikes in 2009. Measured in months of snow cover on the ground, winter is surely Mount Rainier's "longest season," extending well into July most years. Paradise once held the world's record for measured snowfall in a year (1,122" in 1971-72) and averages over 600 inches of snowfall per year. Keeping the road open to Paradise and passable for visitors is a special challenge the park's road crew and rangers face every day.

Travelling on the mountain road to Paradise is an experience itself! If you are trying out your new SUV, remember that it's the skills of the driver that count more than the type of vehicle being driven. Many visitors become overconfident with all-wheel drive, but driving with caution can prevent many vehicle accidents.

For the well prepared, Mount Rainier offers world class recreational opportunities – whether driving, skiing, snowshoeing or climbing – in one of the snowiest places on earth. Please learn what you need to know to stay safe, come prepared and enjoy exploring Mount Rainier in winter...the Mountain's "longest season."

Randy King  
Acting Superintendent

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## Winter Roads & Driving

Most of Mount Rainier’s roads are closed for winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather. The road between Longmire and Paradise closes nightly in winter and reopens in the morning once the road has been plowed. The road may close early or remain closed during the entire day due to poor road conditions or severe weather. While you’re waiting for the road to open, please park in the parking lot, not in a traffic lane. Drive only on plowed roads in the park. The Carbon River Road to Ipsut Creek Campground is closed due to the November 2006 flood.

Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction. Drive with your lights on for safety. Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of roadway are not. Stay alert, use caution, anticipate hazards, and slow down!

## Winter Driving Safety Tips

- \* All vehicles are required to carry tire chains
- \* Reduce your speed
- \* Keep your headlights on for visibility
- \* Allow extra distance between vehicles
- \* Stay well back when following plows
- \* Use low gears, especially when driving downhill
- \* Never stop or park in a traffic lane. Your life may depend on it!
- \* If your RWD vehicle skids: Reduce gas, steer where you want to go
- \* If your FWD vehicle skids: Accelerate slightly and steer where you want to go
- \* Brake sparingly to avoid skidding by locking your brakes
- \* Drive in the appropriate lane for your direction of travel. Avoid the center line
- \* Ensure that your chains fit your tires and practice installing them before you need them
- \* Stop in a chain-up area, pullout, or parking lot to install, adjust, or remove tire chains
- \* When parking, avoid setting your emergency brake. It may freeze

## Follow Traction Requirements

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. State law requires that you carry tire chains at all times when in the mountains. Obey the posted traction requirement.



The road ahead has patches of snow and/or ice covering the surface. Your vehicle should have approved all-season tires, snow tires, or chains on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by “M-S”, “M/S”, “\*\_\*”, or “All Season” on the sidewall of the tires.



The road ahead is snow-packed or icy and drivers can expect some difficulty. Your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable, or plastic) on the drive wheels. AWD and 4WD vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels, are in four wheel drive, and carry one set of chains in the vehicle for later installation if needed.



All vehicles must have chains on the drive wheels including AWD and 4WD.

**Never ski, slide or camp on plowed roadways or parking lots! Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.**

## Snow Play Area

*Sliding and sledding is permitted only in the designated snow play area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise.*

Runs are constructed when there’s sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage – at least five feet. The snow play area may remain open into mid-March, depending on snow. Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is open to sliding (except skiing and snowboarding). Serious injuries and fatalities have occurred elsewhere when people have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down steep slopes, or broken through thin snow into stream gorges.

- Access the snow play area from the main trailhead behind the new visitor center.
- Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted.
- Compressed air is available on weekends and holidays during snow play hours at the upper parking lot restroom.
- Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.

Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric such as wool or polypropylene next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer, not in jeans or T-shirts. Wear a hat, gloves, and snow-sealed boots. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends & holidays).

The snow play area normally closes at 4:30 p.m.

## Skiing, Snowshoeing & Snowboarding

Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmarked routes are available from the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise and the Longmire Museum.

In early winter or in years of low snowfall, trees and other plants are damaged by skiers and snowboarders when snow depth is not sufficient to protect vegetation. Ski and snowboard only in those areas where the snow is deep enough to cover and protect vegetation. There should be at least 5’ of snow before building jumps.

## Longmire - Paradise Road Schedule

The road from Longmire to Paradise closes nightly at Longmire. Plan for normal winter road conditions which are snow covered and icy. Always carry tire chains when driving in mountainous terrain in winter and spring. Traction tires or chains may be required at any time in winter. Please use extra caution on your drive to Paradise.

Effective Dates	Longmire Gate Closed Uphill	Downhill traffic thru Longmire Gate
Jan 3 - 30	5:00 pm	6:00 pm
Jan 31 - Feb 13	5:30 pm	6:30 pm
Feb 14 - 27	6:00 pm	7:00 pm
Feb 28 - March 13	6:30 pm	7:30 pm
March 14 - 27	7:30 pm	8:30 pm
April 28 - March 10	8:30 pm	9:30 pm

**Road opening and closing times may change daily due to weather and road conditions.**



Join a ranger-led snowshoe walk at Paradise.

## Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks

Join a park ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing and find out how plants and animals adapt to winter at Paradise. Snowshoe walks are offered daily December 19 - January 3, and on weekends and holidays only through March, weather permitting.

Public snowshoe walks are offered at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., traverse 1.2 miles, and last for about 2 hours. Walks are limited to 25 people, eight years old or older, on a first-come, first-served basis. A sign-up sheet is available at the Jackson Visitor Center information desk one hour before each walk.

Organized groups (up to 25 people) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 10:30 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum, the Jackson Visitor Center information desk, or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314. The park also offers snowshoe walks to school groups by reservation only. Call (360) 569-2211 ext. 6038 for reservations.

Snowshoes are available for ranger-led snowshoe walks for a suggested \$4.00 donation (per pair). Don’t forget sunscreen, sunglasses, layers of warm clothes, hats, mittens, and suitable boots (you will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on).

## Snow Camping

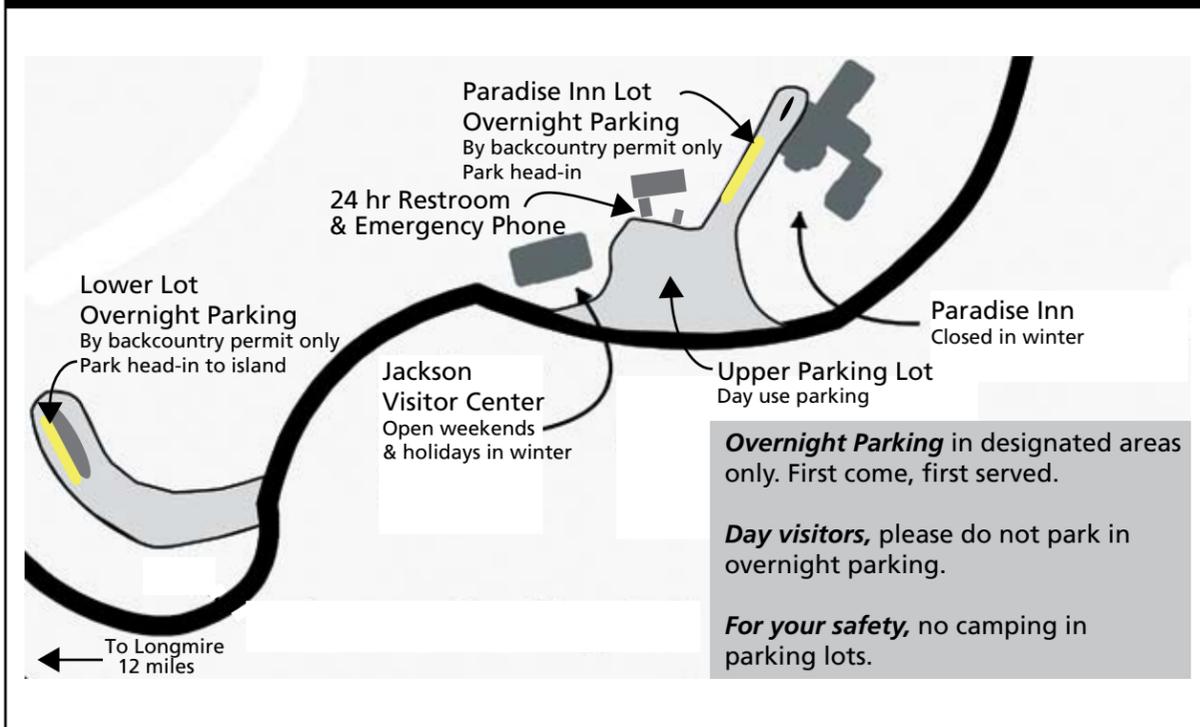
Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Camp in designated areas well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots. When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snow caves to keep others from falling in. Fires are not permitted. Free permits are available at the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise on weekends only.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of any size, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least two weeks in advance due to limited space by calling (360) 569-2211 ext. 6003. Access to 24 hour restrooms and an emergency phone are available in the upper parking lot near the Guide House. Others should use “blue bags” to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in the special barrel provided. The blue bag barrel is located in the tunnel to the Paradise upper parking lot restroom. Do NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!

**Proper food storage is required.** Hang your food, garbage and scented items or secure in approved hard-sided containers. Hard-sided containers are required for camping at Paradise, Reflection Lakes, Tatoosh and Mazama. Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan – ask a ranger when you get your permit. Approved containers for winter camping at Paradise are 5 gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids, or manufactured wildlife resistant food containers such as Garcia, BearVault, and Wild Ideas.

**Overnight parking in designated areas only.** Do not set your parking brake; it may freeze. Stay clear of parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

## PARADISE OVERNIGHT PARKING AREAS



Check today's avalanche forecast at an entrance station or visitor center.

Avalanche on Nisqually Glacier.

## Avalanche Aware!

Snow avalanches are common in winter and spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing in avalanche terrain.

Learn more about safe travel in avalanche country. Consider snowpack, weather, and topography in selecting your route. Ask yourself, "Will this slope slide?" and if it does, "Where will I or my partner go?" Carry an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel.

Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.



## Avalanche Level Descriptions

Slopes between 30 and 45 degrees pose the greatest avalanche danger.

**Low Risk:** Generally stable snow. Travel is usually safe.

**Moderate Risk:** Human-triggered avalanches possible.

**Considerable Risk:** Human triggered avalanches probable.

**High Risk:** Natural and human-triggered avalanches likely. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended.

**Extreme Risk:** Widespread natural and human-triggered avalanches certain. Avoid travel in avalanche terrain. Confine travel to low angle terrain well away from avalanche path runouts.

## Prepare & Take Care

Mount Rainier offers excellent opportunities for exploration and adventure, but sometimes people get lost, injured, or worse. Reduce your risk by following these simple guidelines:

**Dress Warmly & Stay Dry** Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily rob you of body heat. To avoid hypothermia and frostbite, dress warmly and stay dry. Wear layers of wool or synthetics like pile and polypropylene under a waterproof shell. Avoid exposure to wind. Snack frequently, drink lots of water, and take warm-up breaks indoors.

**Beware** Pay attention to the weather. It's easy to get lost or fall when the weather turns bad. The trail can quickly cover with snow, or thick fog can blanket your route. You need to know where you are and how to get to safety. You also need to know how to assess avalanche hazards to minimize potential risk.

**Prepare** When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them. In addition, obtain compass bearings to Camp Muir or other off-trail destinations; carry an altimeter; wear rain- and wind-resistant clothing; and take a whistle, a "space blanket," and a snow shovel.

**Take Care** Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone or in poor visibility.

If you are not truly knowledgeable and prepared, or if the weather is questionable, don't push your luck!

## Winter Wildlife

The snows of winter concentrate wildlife where life is easier—where shallow snow provides easier travel and access to food. Parking areas and roadways are efficient travel corridors for deer and foxes, and deer may find the most available forage along roadways. Many visitors feed wildlife to get a better photograph and some mistakenly think that it helps the animals through the winter months. But this brings wildlife closer to vehicles and people, often with dire consequences. Animals attracted to these busy areas are often injured or killed by vehicles. The feeding of wildlife, an especially significant problem at Paradise, poses a threat to wildlife by increasing the risk of disease transmission (among themselves and to you), unnaturally increasing populations which may prey on other species (jays feed on eggs and nestlings of other songbirds), and causing digestive problems (their systems are adapted to natural foods, not cheese crackers).

Please keep your food away from wildlife. Pick up food particles and don't leave your lunch on your bumper – a fox or a jay will find it. And lastly, **please don't feed the wildlife** – it's bad for them, and it's bad for you – feeding wildlife is illegal and you may be fined.

## Climbing & Backpacking

Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. About half actually make it to the summit. Climbing information is available at ranger stations and on the park's website at [www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm](http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm). Climbers pay a Cost Recovery Fee of \$30 per person, per calendar year. Climbing Passes are available via fax or mail. For more information go to the above website. Be aware that winter camping and climbing are much more demanding and hazardous than in summer.

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the Wilderness and for travel above 10,000' and/or on glaciers. Rangers issue permits from the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise on weekends. Self registration is available at the Carbon River Ranger Station and at the winter closure of SR410 near Crystal Mountain.

*Overnight parking at Paradise is by displayed overnight parking permit in designated areas only.*

Guided climbs and climbing seminars are available through:

Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927  
International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609  
Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (RMI) (888) 892-5462

## Carry the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them!

1. Map of the area
2. Compass
3. Extra food & water
4. Extra clothing (warm!) & rain gear
5. Emergency shelter
6. First aid kit
7. Flashlight or headlamp
8. Sunglasses & sunscreen
9. Pocketknife
10. Matches (waterproof!)\*

**\*For emergency use only; Fires are not allowed in Mount Rainier's Wilderness**

## Protect Yourself & Your Park

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve its resources and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. By observing the rules, you protect your park and yourself:

- Pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet and are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or on snow
- Do not feed or disturb the wildlife
- Stay on designated trails
- Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited
- Weapons are prohibited in the park. Firearms transported through the park must be unloaded, broken down, and stored to prevent use
- Bicycle only on roads, not on trails

## Winter Weather Reports

### Avalanche Hazard Forecasts:

(206) 526-6677

<http://www.nwac.us/forecast/avalanche/current/zone/7/>

### Highway Pass Reports:

(800) 695-7623 or dial direct 511

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/>

## Winter Hours January - April 2010



### Visitor Centers

**Longmire Museum** (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314  
Information, exhibits, book sales, climbing permits  
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily

**New Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise, Upper Parking Lot**  
(360) 569-2211 ext 6036  
Information, exhibits, movies, book sales, food service, gifts  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekends/holidays, and daily Dec. 19 - Jan. 3

**Carbon River Ranger Station** (360) 829-9639  
Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits (including Ipsut Creek campground)  
Call for hours



### Food & Lodging

For lodging reservations in the park call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to [www.mtrainierguestservices.com/](http://www.mtrainierguestservices.com/)

**National Park Inn - Longmire**  
Lodging, post office, and dining room serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open year-round.

**General Store - Longmire**  
Groceries, gifts, firewood. Open year-round (Ski and snowshoe rentals and tire chain purchases are available in winter.)  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily  
During ski touring season:  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. weekends/holidays

**Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise**  
Food service, gift shop and snowshoe rentals  
11:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekends/holidays and daily Dec. 19 - Jan. 3

**Paradise Inn & Sunrise Lodge**  
Closed for the season



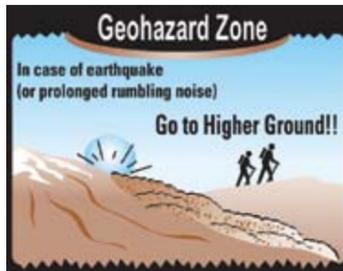
Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities. Religious services are available in local communities outside the park.

**GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK**

## Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help for wheelchair users. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the new Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistive listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits will soon be available; and the building and exhibits are accessible to wheelchair users. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible when snow-free. TDD: (360) 569-2177

## Mount Rainier An Active Volcano



Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead. Seismic

monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

The more time you spend in an area with geologic hazards, the greater the chance that you could be involved in an emergency event. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, you must decide if you will assume the risk of visiting these potentially dangerous locations. If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley – often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train – move quickly to higher ground! A location 160 feet or more above river level should be safe. Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, or visit the U.S.G.S. Cascade Volcanoes website: [vulcan.wr.usgs.gov](http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov).



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park

Acting Superintendent: Randy King

Contact Information

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Park Headquarters  
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(360) 569-2177 TDD

Website  
[www.nps.gov/mora](http://www.nps.gov/mora)

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

## Do Your Part for Climate Friendly Parks!



Mount Rainier National Park is a climate friendly park with a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2016 - the centennial of the National Park Service. You can be part of the effort by logging on to the Do Your Part! website

to calculate your carbon footprint and set your personal goals. Don't forget to select Mount Rainier as your favorite park! To log on to Do Your Part! go to <http://doyourpartparks.org/index.php>. Visit the Climate Friendly Parks website for more information on Climate Friendly Parks <http://www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/index.html>.

## Park Partners

Who's responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone!  
Here are some people who deserve special thanks:



**Visitors Like You!** Just by paying the entrance fee, you make a difference. Eighty percent of the fees collected at Mount Rainier are kept in the park, while twenty percent are made available to other parks in need. Your money is helping several projects right now:

- Rehabilitating park trails
- Meadow restoration
- Upgrading exhibits and media
- Rehabilitating picnic areas

As you explore the park, look for signs of your fees at work!



**Discover Your Northwest (formerly Northwest Interpretive Association)** provides resources like travel guides, maps, educational books, DVD's, and other materials for visitors to public lands. They generate funding every year for projects and programs that enhance visitor experiences through retail sales in bookstores located in visitor and information centers across the Northwest. As a nonprofit partner benefiting educational programs in national parks, Discover Your Northwest plays an important role in making interpretive and educational publications like this available to visitors. To find out more, visit one of their locations in the park, call the Mount Rainier location at (360) 569-2211, ext. 3320, or visit them online at [www.discovernw.org](http://www.discovernw.org).



**Volunteers** Each year more than 137,000 volunteers donate over 5,200,000 hours of service in the national parks. They come from every state and nearly every country in the world to help preserve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. At Mount Rainier National Park, 1,865 volunteers contributed a total of 72,231 hours in 2009. We express our deep appreciation to them and to all who are volunteering in 2010! Both short and long-term opportunities are available. For a schedule of activities and information on how to join our team, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (360) 569-2211 ext. 3385, or visit our website at [www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm](http://www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm).



**Washington's National Park Fund** Every year millions of people visit Washington state's spectacular national parks: Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic. Since 1993, Washington's National Park Fund has connected people to parks and inspired contributions of time, talent and money. The Fund helps ensure that visitors have high quality, memorable experiences by sponsoring educational, trail and wildlife projects. By securing funding from individuals, corporations, foundations and businesses, the Fund supports park restoration, enhancement and preservation. For information about how you can help Washington's national parks, call 206-770-0627 or visit [www.wnnpf.org](http://www.wnnpf.org).



**Student Conservation Association** SCA is a nationwide force of high school and college-age volunteers who are committed to protecting and preserving the environment. Through internships, conservation jobs and crew experiences, SCA members are rising to meet environmental challenges while gaining real, hands-on field experience. They complete projects in every conservation discipline from archaeology to zoology. SCA directed volunteer efforts at Mount Rainier National Park in response to the floods of 2006, for which it received the Department of the Interior's Cooperative Conservation Award. For more information about SCA or to get involved, visit [www.thesca.org](http://www.thesca.org).